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Duxbury Clipper

Sullivan feted at last meeting

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Outgoing three-term Selectman Betsy Sullivan was feted at her last board meeting Monday night.

Sullivan was honored by both her staff, who presented her with a resolution, and by State Representative Thomas Calter, who gave her a proclamation from the state legislature recognizing her public service. Sullivan's nine years as a selectman and 19 years of volunteering on town boards and committees was also acknowledged with a resolution at the Saturday session of the annual Town Meeting March 12.

Anne Murray who works in the selectmen's office wrote the staff's resolution, which recognized Sullivan as a "mentor and a friend."

Sullivan has "gone above and beyond in serving the staff, always responding to their calls and e-mails" while being a "much needed source of amusement" for her staff, wrote Murray.

"Betsy has the Irish gift of gab that never fails to entertain and an endless stream of sayings to go with it," wrote Murray. "We will miss her... because Betsy brightened our lives."

Acknowledging her some times feisty nature, Murray wrote that Sullivan "has never shied away from a controversial topic, having no problem letting others know where she stood on an issue and being unanimous in knowing she was right."



LAST HURRAH: Betsy Sullivan, shown here surrounded by family members, was honored during her last Board of Selectmen meeting. Sullivan is not seeking re-election after three terms on the board.

In crediting Sullivan's achievements, Calter recalled the confidential folder of bios he received from former state representative Thomas O'Brien, which listed the personalities and characters of all the selectmen in his district's six towns.

Calter said that Sullivan's bio was the "most unique and flattering assessment of any type of public official in the six towns I represent."

In his letter, O'Brien said: "Sullivan is tough, she's fun, she's fair, she's always prepared, and she knows how to laugh," Calter remembered. "Then I got to meet you, and you probably don't recall, but I was standing right here, and I said 'We're going to do the best we can on the budget,' and you said 'You'd better!'"

As Calter presented Sullivan with the proclamation from the House of Representatives that congratulated her on her "leadership, selfless dedication and tireless commitment" to the Duxbury Board of Selectmen from 2002 to 2011, he said: "You're always the person who is making sure that the other person is being recognized, and in public service, that is a beautiful quality, it's a rare quality and one that we need more of. You're always the person to make sure

that conflicts get resolved in an amicable way – another beautiful quality.”

Selectmen Chairman Shawn Dahlen told Sullivan: “In a town with a tremendous amount of volunteers, you are truly a shining star. You have taken this position and held it to the highest standard.”

“You will be missed,” Town Manager Richard MacDonald told Sullivan. “You’ve been a tremendous selectman and the town is proud of you.”

“Thank you,” responded Sullivan. “It has been a pleasure to serve.”

Prior to her election as a selectmen, Sullivan served on the School Committee from 1992-2001 and was its chairman in 1993 and 1994; she was also a member of the Finance Committee. As a selectman, Sullivan served on the Plymouth County Advisory Board, the Affordable Housing Committee, the Town Government Study Committee, and was also the Selectmen’s liaison to numerous boards and committees.

“You came up ladder, paid your dues and learned it from the grass roots on up, and that’s what’s made you such a tremendous selectperson,” said Calter.

“I know that great public servants don’t go away,” Calter

continued. “They come, they serve, they have an impact, and they leave, and that’s what they are supposed to do. But then they come back when the call comes again.”

Murray echoed this sentiment in her resolution, saying that “Sullivan learned from her father to always leave the party when people are still sorry to see you go, and we can truly say we are sorry to see Betsy go.”

In other business, selectmen:

- Were informed that the town went out to bid again for the North Hill golf course management contract and received one bid this week. MacDonald said that bid will be scrutinized by the state’s Inspector General and will be reviewed by the court that is overseeing the pending lawsuit between the town and the former manager, Johnson Golf, Inc., who has been allowed by court order to remain the manager of North Hill.

- Learned that Town Manager Richard MacDonald would like to form a committee to celebrate Duxbury’s 375th birthday next year. Anyone interested in serving on this committee can fill out a talent bank form and submit it to the selectmen’s office or call that office for more information.